

REMARKS

Applicant is in receipt of the Office Action mailed August 17, 2004. Claims 1-48 were pending in the application. Applicant has amended claims 1, 14, 16, 29, 31, and 36; canceled claims 12, 13, 27, 28, 42, 43, and 45-48; and added new claims 49-78. Accordingly, claims 1-11, 14-26, 29-41, 44, and 49-78 remain pending in the application.

The Office Action objected to claims 4-8, 10, 13, 19-23, 25, 28, 34-38, 40, and 43 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but indicated that the claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's consideration of these claims.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-3, 9, 11, 12, 14-18, 24, 26, 27, 29-33, 39, 41, 42, and 44-48 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art (hereinafter "AAPA") in view of Giordano et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,544,308, hereinafter "Giordano").

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of original claim 13 and intervening claim 12. Applicant submits that independent claim 1 recites a combination of features deemed allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, claim 1 is believed to patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Claim 16 has been amended to include the limitations of original claim 28 and intervening claim 27. Applicant submits that independent claim 16 recites a combination of features deemed allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, claim 16 is believed to patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Claim 31 has been amended to include the limitations of original claim 43 and intervening claim 42. Applicant submits that independent claim 31 recites a combination of

features deemed allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, claim 31 is believed to patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Applicant respectfully requests examination of added claims 49-78. New independent claim 49 includes the limitations of original claims 1 and 4. New independent claim 56 includes the limitations of original claims 1 and 10. New independent claim 59 includes the limitations of original claims 16 and 19. New independent claim 66 includes the limitations of original claims 16 and 25. New independent claim 69 includes the limitations of original claims 31 and 34. New independent claim 76 includes the limitations of original claims 31 and 40. Applicant submits that each of these new independent claims recites a combination of features deemed allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, claims 49-78 are believed to patentably distinguish over the cited references.

For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that claims 1-11, 14-26, 29-41, 44, and 49-78 are in condition for allowance. Applicant therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejections.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance, and an early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If a phone interview would speed allowance of any pending claims, such is requested at the Examiner's convenience.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Meyertons, Hood, Kivlin, Kowert & Goetzel, P.C. Deposit Account No. 501505\5681-79800.

Respectfully submitted,



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